

CITIZEN'S POLICE REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES

Meeting Date: February 1, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting due to COVID-19/City Hall Closure

Board Members Present: William Muhammad in Muskegon Hts., MI; David Bukala in Grand Haven, MI; Ann Craig in Muskegon, MI; Ron Hayward (phone) Muskegon, MI; Ruby Clark in Muskegon, MI; Josie James in Muskegon, MI

Board Members Absent: Rozella Patino, Faye Redmond, Robert Roundtree

Staff Present: Denny Powers, Interim Staff Liaison; Dennis Lord, Administrative Captain

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Ann Craig. A quorum was present.

Approval of the Previous Minutes

Vice-chairperson Ann Craig called for the approval of the January meeting minutes.

Ruby Clark motioned for approval of the minutes. The motion was supported by David Bukala and passed with unanimous consent.

Chairperson William Muhammad joined the zoom meeting at 6:38 p.m. and took over as chair of the meeting.

Unfinished Business

Denny Powers noted that when the board receives complaint forms on complaints that have not yet been appealed that they are not to be discussed in open forum and are not public information at that point.

New Business

Ann Craig asked if there was a copy of Roberts Rules of Order that was available for the board. David Bukala had several versions including a condensed version that he showed the board. William Muhammad also noted that the information we need for our purposes would most likely be found online as well.

Chairperson William Muhammad introduced Captain Dennis Lord to cover the new business agenda item.

Captain Lord discussed a new process of assigning internal affairs case numbers to complaints that are not made as formal complaints. He noted that a recent case where questions arose about previous complaints against an officer for which there was no paper trail played a role in this. He noted that we are talking about minor situations where a person comes in and wishes to discuss an incident with a command officer and it is explained how to file a formal complaint but the person does not wish to do so at that point.

Under the new system, all of these will be documented by the command officer and an internal affairs case number will be assigned even though the person has not yet filed a formal complaint. The CPRB will receive copies of these as well even though they are not formal complaints yet at that point. Thus, the number of internal affairs complaint numbers will go up because all of these will be documented even though the person does not wish to file a formal complaint.

The process involves a form (which was shown at the meeting), whereby the command officer will document the complaint, note if audio/video was reviewed, note if the video was held for any future possible formal complaint, note that the complainant was advised of the formal complaint procedure should they wish to pursue that, whether the issue was resolved or not, action taken and command officers notes. This is then reviewed by the Administrative Captain and if he is not satisfied with it, it can be sent back for further action or he can initiate a formal complaint/investigation.

Captain Lord noted that we are now also allowing anonymous complaints.

He also discussed that MPD has been seeking accreditation for close to two years now. He noted that our entire policy manual is now available for viewing on the website.

After discussing the procedure and what it takes to become accredited, Captain Lord stated that the final onsite visit took place about two weeks ago and that on February 11 there will be a hearing where we anticipate our agency being accredited.

Chairperson William Muhammad noted that this is a good thing and that it adds a level of accountability. He asked if under the complaint procedure where the complaint is not filed as a formal complaint if the complainant gets a copy of the form used by the command officer.

Captain Lord responded that they do not and that these are mainly minor issues that are handled by phone call.

Captain Lord noted that these interactions are all entered into the Guardian system as an early warning system which creates flags if it sees a pattern of too many uses of force complaints, etc. by a particular officer. He states that in addition to tracking negatives it also tracks positives as well.

David Bukala offered his congratulations on the accreditation and also thanks for sharing about the early warning system as he was not aware of that and thinks it is a good thing.

Ann Craig asked if a recent meeting that was held for public comment played into any of this. Captain Lord stated that a lot of these changes were done long before the accreditation process began and came out of a desire to be transparent and fill in gaps.

Josie James asked if all of these new complaint forms would be forwarded to the CPRB. Captain Lord stated that as of right now he sees no reason why we would hold any back.

Josie James asked about how recently the officers got body cameras. Captain Lord stated that the process involves body cameras but also a switch to a matching in car system and that as of now we have received 90% of the equipment but that the vendor (WatchGuard) cannot do the uploads and install until most likely early May.

Josie James asked about why some cases would have audio only and Captain Lord stated that right now until everyone has body cameras that if they are not within view of their vehicle which have video that they only thing available would be the audio.

Ruby Clark asked about cameras as they relate to bicycle officers. Captain Lord stated that no cameras will be on the bikes but that once the body cameras are set up and available to all officers that they would then have body cameras on them.

Chairperson William Muhammad stated that all of this helps flesh out some areas and will hopefully hold the department to have more accountability and hopefully lead to greater respect in the community.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Adjournment

Ann Craig motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ruby Clark. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

The next meeting is Monday, March 1, 2021 at 6:30pm via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Denny Powers, Interim Staff Liaison to the CPRB